

Lexicon Generum Phanerogamarum *

Under this title has recently appeared a work which presents, in concentrated form, the results of a vast amount of careful and thorough work. There are here brought together, within the compass of 750 octavo pages, an elaborate code of nomenclature, a complete enumeration of the genera of flowering plants proposed from 1737 to 1902 (and a few in 1903), and a systematic arrangement of all those recognized as valid. It was obviously impossible for the authors to include full citations, but the date of publication is mentioned whenever it is of importance.

According to the title-page, the author is Tom von Post, the director of the seed-testing station at Upsala, and no doubt much of the value of the compilation is due to his labors; but there is the further statement "opus revisum et auctum ab Otto Kuntze," and to a person familiar with Dr. Kuntze's productions, his impress is discernible upon every page. His connection with the work lends to it a certain stamp of reliability which it would not otherwise possess, yet his unique view-point makes it impossible for any well-informed botanist to accept the results as in any manner authoritative.

Radical as are his views regarding nomenclatural reform, there is perhaps no more conservative living botanist than Dr. Kuntze, when it comes to the recognition of genera. This work admits only 8,333 genera of living phanerogams, while at Kew, where the influence of Bentham & Hooker's masterpiece has led to what is commonly regarded as extreme conservatism, the number recognized is not far from 9,000; the number allowed by the exponents of the Englerian system is nearer 10,000; and the principles followed by many continental and most American botanists would result in the recognition of a much larger number. The reduction in the number of genera is readily understood when we observe that all the genera of Cactaceae recognized by recent monographers are reduced to a single genus, *Cactus*; incidentally it may be remarked that this treatment obviates the necessity of determining to which of the component genera the

* Post, T. v. & Kuntze, O. *Lexicon Generum Phanerogamarum*, inde ab anno MDCCXXXVII. i-xlvi, 1-714. Stuttgart, 1904.

Linnaean name *Cactus* should be applied. The expression of such erratic views of classification in a nomenclator intended for general use is unfortunate, almost as much so as the peculiar results which spring from the application of the code of nomenclature adopted as a basis for the work.

This code, termed by Dr. Kuntze his "Codex brevis maturus," and intended for presentation at the Vienna Congress in 1905, was published in advance of the Lexicon, with commentaries, from which extracts have already appeared in TORREYA.* By a happy inspiration, these "inevitably polemic" commentaries are here omitted, with the explanation that they "shall not be inserted into the Lexicon to make it free from polemic . . . anyone who likes polemic can easily buy it." The chief characteristics of the code which affect the nomenclature of the Lexicon are the adoption of the year 1737 as the starting-point for genera, and the freedom with which the spelling of generic names has been revised in accordance with elaborate and more or less arbitrary rules of orthography.

The Codex is marred by the presence of frequent index figures, referring to the missing commentaries. It is printed in German, French and English, in parallel columns, the English version being expressed in the quaintly picturesque phraseology for which Dr. Kuntze is famous. For instance, there are provisions "to insure an uniform orthography and clear coördination of corrected homonyms instead of distant uncorrected-ones, and to avoid the validity of several homonyms only differing by inequal orthography," and among the provisions for the representation of botanical societies in international congress, is one to the effect that "these votes can only be represented by one or more orderly members of each society!"

Typographically, the work is remarkably free from errors. The accepted genera are brought out clearly by the use of bold-face type, but the data accompanying these bold-face names run together with the cross-references in an annoying way that could easily have been avoided by the judicious use of italic.

This is not the place for an extended discussion of the peculiar nomenclatural views of Dr. Kuntze, as expressed in his latest

* TORREYA, 3: 154-157. O 1903.

code. Suffice it to say that he has few, if any, supporters in America, and it is doubtful whether he has any in Europe. Possibly the vituperation poured upon all who disagree with him has prevented his ideas from receiving as serious consideration as they deserve. It is certainly unfortunate that he should regard himself as an infallible referee upon all points in dispute, and hurl anathemas at all who refuse to acknowledge his authority, characterizing their propositions as "dishonest," "inexecutable," "false" and "lawless." JOHN HENDLEY BARNHART.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY, 27, 1904

This meeting was held at the New York Botanical Garden with Professor Underwood in the chair; thirty persons were present.

The treasurer's report deferred from the last meeting was read and also that of the auditing committee.

The report of the auditing committee showed that there were 194 active members at the time of the last meeting, January 12.

The editor-in-chief as chairman of the committee for securing increased sale of the publications of the Club announced Miss Vail and Dr. Howe as the other members of the committee.

The following resignations of members of the Club were read and having been approved by the treasurer were accepted: Miss Amy Schussler, Mr. Ewen MacIntyre, Mr. Marshall Bright, Dr. Alexander P. Anderson, Miss E. W. Kornman, Dr. L. Schoeney and Mr. E. G. Buttrick.

The announcement was made that President Brown had reappointed all the standing committees with the same membership as last year, viz.,

Committee on Finance: H. H. Rusby, J. I. Kane, C. F. Cox.

Committee on Admissions: E. S. Burgess, Delia W. Marble, J. K. Small.

Committee on Local Flora:

Spermatophytes: N. L. Britton, E. P. Bicknell, H. H. Rusby, Fanny A. Mulford.